

## Emma Bancroft Yinger, “Mother of Michigan”

### Description

[Emma Bancroft Yinger, 1947](#)  
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In honor of Women’s History Month, we are spotlighting Emma Bancroft Yinger, an Albion College alum and well known Methodist Minister.

Emma Bancroft Yinger was born May 9, 1875, in Lenawee County, Michigan. From an early age, Emma knew she wanted to enter the ministry. However, she was raised Presbyterian and at that time, the denomination forbid women to preach. She decided to leave her Presbyterian roots and began her religious education first with the Quakers at the Raisin Valley Seminary and then with the Church of Christ at Defiance College.

While at Defiance, she met George Yinger, a visiting Albion College student. After a year of working together, they married and transferred to Albion College to complete their education. George graduated in 1903 and his wife followed a year later. While serving their first congregation in Concord, Michigan, Emma gave birth to her first son, Clement Yinger. Seven more children followed: Dempster, Eleanor, Homer, Paul, Floyd, J. Milton and Marian Yinger.

George Yinger established singing schools at every church they served, and as his children grew older, decided to create a quartet with his four eldest children. “The Yinger Singers” was born. When the older ones got too busy with college and marriage, the younger ones took over. There were several transformations of “The Yinger Singers”, but all included Emma Yinger’s children. The group became quite popular across the Midwest through the teens and twenties.

Although she had been ordained in the Church of Christ in 1903, it wasn’t until 1924 that Emma Yinger was officially ordained as a Methodist minister. (Since the founding of the Methodist Church, women were ordained alongside men, but in 1880s, the Methodist Episcopal Church took away ordination rights from women. This decision wasn’t reversed until 1924). Her first church was in Greenville, Michigan, and was followed by Grand Rapids, South Haven, and Three Rivers. After the death of her husband in 1934, Emma relocated the family to Indiana, but moved back to Michigan when her youngest daughter was accepted to Albion College. She preached in Hanover and Horton throughout that time.

In 1938, Emma Yinger joined the staff of the Michigan School for the Blind, where she taught for 3 years. Her plans to retire were thwarted due to a teacher shortage in WWII; Houston, Michigan asked her to teach and she accepted. Hence, she returned to Southwest Michigan and continued to preach in Marshall.

In 1947, the Golden Rule Foundation named Emma Bancroft Yinger the Michigan Mother of the Year. The ceremony took place at the First Methodist Church in Albion and was presided over by her son, G. Dempster Yinger, Pastor of the parish. The Yinger Quartet was resurrected for the occasion.

She was named in the first edition of "Who's Who of American Women" in 1960 as a Minister and poet. She passed away November 9, 1960. In 1994, her children, Marian Yinger Coppenhaver and J. Milton Yinger, donated her family's papers to the Albion College Archives.

Her legacy lives on through the annual Yinger Family Lecture held at Albion College. This year's lecture will feature Ann Pancake and is scheduled for Thursday, March 17th at 7:00 PM. For more details, [click here](#).

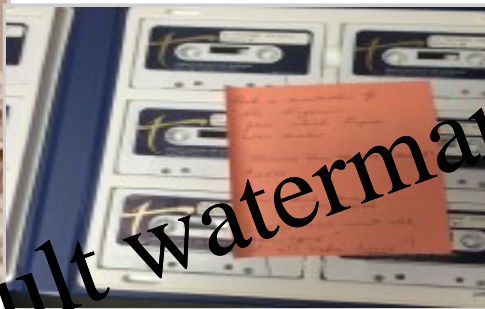
Gallery of Yinger Photos:

**Category**

- 1. Uncategorized

**Tags**

- 1. Alumni
- 2. Emma Bancroft Yinger
- 3. Methodist
- 4. women
- 5. Women's History Month



"Do you still want all this typed up? It will take hours!"

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